

Mankato, MN— Today, Congressman Walz heard from constituents about their first hand experience with our health insurance system and the need for reform while sitting around a kitchen table at a home in Mankato, MN.

“What I heard today confirms what I’ve been hearing time and time again from ordinary people across southern Minnesota – the current health care insurance system isn’t working,” said Walz. “It is too expensive and too uncertain for middle class families and small businesses.”

“Betty Winkworth told me today that while she worries about the high cost she and her husband have to pay for health care, she is more concerned about her children’s access to stable, affordable health insurance,” said Walz. “Health insurance reform should provide people like Betty the peace of mind knowing that her children can go to the doctor when they are sick and will not face bankruptcy if they have a serious illness.”

“Betty also told me that she feels her son and daughter are missing out on better career opportunities because they are afraid they will lose their health insurance if they change jobs or start their own small business,” continued Walz. “Our health insurance system should support – not discourage – the American entrepreneurial spirit.”

Congressman Walz has the following guiding principles for health insurance reform: (1) if you like the coverage you have, you should be able to keep it; (2) we should pay doctors for good outcomes, not the quantity of care they provide; (3) reform should lower costs and streamline the system; and (4) reform should not increase our budget deficit

“I also heard from Christine, who was kicked off her health insurance plan when she could no longer afford to pay increasing premiums. She had to stop taking the medicine she needs to stay well.” Walz said. “We need health insurance reform that increases competition to help keep premiums down so that businesses like the one Christine works at are able to provide affordable insurance.”

Congressman Walz also heard from Melaine who lost her insurance coverage when her husband lost his job.

“Families and business owners are struggling under our current health insurance system and my constituents have made it clear to me that we need reform,” said Walz. “I’m committed to reforming health care insurance in a way that reduces costs to families, businesses and the taxpayers, while protecting patients’ choice of doctor. These stories I heard today will help me determine whether the health insurance reform bill that comes before the House addresses these concerns and serves southern Minnesota’s best collective interest.”

Participants included:

Christine Carmichael: Christine’s health insurance company terminated her plan after she could not afford the high cost of her premium. She was forced to stop taking medication she needed

for her rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis and her condition has worsened as a result.

Melaine Zeigler: Melaine lives with chronic immune disease, but lost her health insurance when her husband lost his job.

Betty Winkworth: In addition to being worried about the high cost of prescriptions for her husband's rheumatoid arthritis, Betty is concerned that her son and daughter do not have access to stable, affordable health insurance.

Wes Gilbert: Wes suffered from a severe knee injury and he will need knee replacement surgery at some point. He works part-time and goes to school part-time. He spends \$500 a month on health care costs.